

## May 29<sup>th</sup>, Trinity Sunday, Memorial Day Weekend

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Page | 1

### Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

Does not wisdom call,  
and does not understanding raise her voice?  
On the heights, beside the way,  
at the crossroads she takes her stand;  
beside the gates in front of the town,  
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:  
"To you, O people, I call,  
and my cry is to all that live.  
The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of long ago.  
Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.  
When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.  
Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth--  
when he had not yet made earth and fields,  
or the world's first bits of soil.  
When he established the heavens, I was there,  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
then I was beside him, like a master worker;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race."

## Psalm 8 Page 592, BCP

1 O LORD our Governor, \*  
how exalted is your Name in all the world!  
2 Out of the mouths of infants and children \*  
your majesty is praised above the heavens.  
3 You have set up a stronghold against your adversaries, \*  
to quell the enemy and the avenger.  
4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, \*  
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,  
5 What is man that you should be mindful of him? \*  
the son of man that you should seek him out?  
6 You have made him but little lower than the angels; \*  
you adorn him with glory and honor;  
7 You give him mastery over the works of your hands; \*  
you put all things under his feet:  
8 All sheep and oxen, \*  
even the wild beasts of the field,  
9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea, \*  
and whatsoever walks in the paths of the sea.  
10 O LORD our Governor, \*  
how exalted is your Name in all the world!

Page | 2

## Romans 5:1-5

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

## John 16:12-15

Jesus said to the disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

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Many weeks ago, even months ago, I began to draw into my sermons the many things that lay ahead for us, the so-many-things to be looking forward to:

- The work that lay before you in the search process beginning with
  - The parish-wide survey prepared by your Search Committee and the need for as much input as possible, which by the way you excelled with a participation rate higher than almost any other parish;
  - The follow-up Focus Group meetings each of four Sundays with the Search Committee and Vestry meeting to refine and sharpen the results
- And, with a bit of breathing room to pull it all together, the coming together for Profile Celebration Sunday and seeing the results of your work to be presented to those discerning a call to serve as your new rector;
- Interestingly enough, that Sunday coincided with a letter from Bishop Marble about his appointment to come visit us the same Sunday; and, it blended well with not only the Celebration of the Profile but, also, the Bishop's visit and the Confirmation of Jordan Hileman;
- Lastly, there came Pentecost Sunday and the Spirit-filled celebration with thanks to John and Margaret Mueller as the end came to his term as Interim Music Director, for the third and last time.

Page | 3

And now here we are at Trinity Sunday. All of that is past and we stand at the first of Pentecost Sundays, the long Pentecost season that will carry us into November. And here we are coincidentally standing with Memorial Day and the three-day weekend that opens up the doorway to our summertime plans.

Trinity Sunday! Let's be honest with each other.

Every Sunday in my sermons, I set out:

- To tie together the elements of our corporate and individual lives with the biblical stories presented to us,
- To tie together the works of Jesus with the works of our own lives, or

- To tie together the fascinating lives of our Old Testament forbearers with all that we have in common with them,
- And to share with you what seem to me as God Moments then and God Moments now.

But as hard as I try and as moved as much as I am by the presence of the Holy source in our lives creating, redeeming and sustaining, Trinity Sundays always run the risk of defying mathematics – “How does  $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ ?”

I don't know which is harder, writing a sermon for Trinity Sunday or sitting in the pew listening to a Trinity Sunday sermon. I am reminded today of Eutychus, the patron saint of sermon listeners. Acts 20.9 tells us “A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead.” Be relieved. Acts goes on to relate that Paul rushed out and resuscitated Eutychus.

Our Trinity lessons are beautiful:

- There is Proverbs, part of what is called the body of Wisdom literature, laying before us the poetic beauty of the Spirit of God, the *ruach*, the *Sophia*, the Spirit of God present in the crossroads now and before the beginning of time:
  - On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand beside the gates in front of the town . . .
  - Created at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago, before the beginning of the earth, when there were no depths, no springs abounding with water; before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth . . . rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.
- There is Paul writing to introduce himself to his soon-to-be met brothers and sisters in Christ in whom “we have peace with God” boasting that “suffering produces endurance, endurance produces

character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts ...  
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- And there is Jesus, in John's Gospel, always pointing away from himself and toward God, "he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

Page | 5

And, now, here we are at Trinity Sunday, the first of so many Sundays in that long, long season of Pentecost. Days and weeks and months stretch out in front of us. What shall we make of our time now and that which lies ahead?

A few days ago, I was reminded of how sometime that the truly substantial moments of our lives can be lost to memory, how we forget for a bit and may feel at loose ends and lost, may wonder "God, where are you?"

A few days ago, I came upon a recently broadcast PBS production called "For Love of Liberty." Broadcast last week, perhaps in anticipation of Memorial Day, "For Love of Liberty" traces the sacrifice of African Americans in service to this country from the time before the Revolution up to the present. In each age are moments when human spirit is allied with what can only be said to be God's Holy Spirit.

"For Love of Liberty" is the story of men and women who have stepped up again and again inspired to give themselves. And, then, it too tells of their loss. Having given their best, having given that which would seem to have won them nobility, it is taken from them again and again. To borrow from Paul, it would seem to be a prime example of suffering producing endurance, endurance producing character, and character producing hope, but ending in hope disappointed. And yet it wasn't. "For Love of Liberty" may not be a noble story of a nation's history, but it is a noble and powerful series of stories of human spirit and hope maintained.

Not many years ago I experienced a situation, a crisis, in which hope seemed lost. Events facing me seemed to say that there was no future. Too often we do measure our lives and ourselves by what lies ahead. We forget the

substantial moments of what has been and is and, instead, get distracted by what we hope to gain. In my own moment and in the moments of the people who have gone before, I was reminded of the call to celebrate what our lives are filled with and have always been filled with. I was reminded of the *ruach*, the *Sophia*, the Spirit of God present at the places of our lives that we inhabit, and not that we hope to inhabit.

Page | 6

We are at the beginning of the Pentecost Season, we are at Trinity Sunday. The days and weeks and months ahead will no doubt bring some anxiety and wondering about what lies ahead. What is the Search Committee doing? What kind of Rector will we find? What lies ahead for us?

Such thoughts are normal. But let this Sunday be one in which we also learn to celebrate the presence of God, creator, redeemer, and sustainer, in all that has gone before and all that is present now.